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## **Web-Based TeleDermatology**

Teledermatology provides accurate and rapid diagnosis of dermatological conditions and is becoming widely accepted as a normal business practice. The use of secure, Web-based store-and-forward Telemedicine technology to provide diagnostic and consultative evaluation at remote referral hospitals will reduce the need for time-consuming transportation and unnecessary referrals. This is especially important in the case of active duty patients where rapid return to duty is mission essential.

In response to the NARMC and Tri-service Teledermatology consortium requirement, Telemedicine has developed a secure system designed to allow medical treatment facilities throughout the Region to submit dermatology consults. The system includes a password protected and encrypted World Wide Web connection to a dedicated Web server housed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, as well as a computerized patient record. A digital camera is used to capture dermatological conditions.

When a remote site physician wishes a Teledermatology consult, that physician completes a simple consult request form and has the patient photographed by a Consult Manager, who then completes the required information collection and processing, entering the information in the Web-based system.

Once the consult is entered into the system, dermatologists from the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) access the Teledermatology Web Server from within their organizations or even their homes, and complete their evaluation. Prior studies from WRAMC have shown that more than 50% of all Teledermatology consults can be successfully completed without ever requiring the patient to travel to a dermatologist. This new Web-based technology is able to reduce patient care costs, increase access to subspecialty care, and provide a teaching tool to general medical personnel throughout the Region. The Teledermatology system was first deployed in the NARMC.

The system has been deployed throughout the Medical Command, to Brook Army Medical Center, Eisenhower Army Medical Center, and Madigan Army Medical Center located in CONUS, and to Landstuhl Army Medical Center located in Europe. Between the five Army Medical Centers, over 2,000 consults have been completed.

The system has undergone an Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) preparatory to migrating into the U.S. Army Information Management mainstream for long-term, regular use. Patent pending.

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